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A SYNOPSIS ON

"SHASHI DESHPANDE'S NOVELS: A STUDY IN FEMINISM"

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Introduction:

The topic of the research is **A Feminist Study of Shashi Deshpande's Fictions.** The study intends to examine five major novels of Shashi Deshpande. They are: *Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence, The Binding Vine, A Matter of Time and In the Country of Deceit* from feminist point of view, especially in Indian context.

Definition of Feminism:

The term 'feminism' has its origin from the Latin word '*Femina*' meaning 'Woman', and there by the term refers to the thought which focuses on women-existence, their rights and powers. It is an organized movement, launched by the women of east, which promotes equality of women in political, economic and social fields. In other words we can say that it is a political, social, cultural, and economic movement which campaigns for the equal rights of women as well as for the protection of women and girls from domestic violence and sexual harassment. Feminism deals with the issues of gender indifference and feminists believe that women are suppressed simply due to their sex, as the society is based on the principles of patriarchy. Patriarchy is the system which subjugates women through its social, economic and political institutions. To maintain their power, men have created boundaries and obstacles for women, thus making it harder for women to retain power. Nancy F. Cott, one of the founders of the field of U.S women's history, defines feminism as a belief which is important for gender equality and which invalidates the idea of gender hierarchy as a socially constructed concept. According to Simone de Beauvoir, "the first time we see a woman take up her pen in defence of her sex" was Christine de Pizan who wrote *Epître au Dieu d'Amour* (Epistle to the God of Love) in the 15th century. The terms 'feminist', 'female', and 'feminine' are distinct from each other. A rigid theorist and

renowned critic of the time, Toril Moi, explains feminist as 'a political position', female as 'a matter of biology' and feminine as 'a set of culturally defined characteristics'. Feminist literary theory has evolved according to the needs and demands of the international women's movement initiated in the 1960s. Although, feminist movements and theories were led predominantly by middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America but after the collapse of colonialism, the women in former European colonies and the Third World have proposed "Post-colonial" and "Third World" feminisms. Feminism has its significance for the following reasons-

i. It sheds light on the observations, situations, responses, problems and struggles of half of humanity.

ii. It reveals consciousness formed by gender.

iii. It questions the social values and structures which were till date thought as axiomatic.

iv. It has helped in the emancipation and liberation of women through radical movements and silent changes, through legal and political battles.

Feminism in India:

In all male-dominated societies the condition of women is very bad and India is no exception. The changing status and position of women in different periods and in different civilizations has greatly influenced their upbringing and education. During the Vedic period the position of a woman was much higher. Women took part in the intellectual and spiritual life of the community. The Vedic society worshiped a goddess of earth-mother type. The pre-Vedic society was basically matriarchal. If we go through the ancient literature we will come across many celebrities and clans who took their names from their mothers and

not from their fathers. In the Rig Vedic period women were considered as the breath and the life of the family. They had liberty of movement and they enjoyed a position on a par with man. The man and the woman were considered as the 'two wheels of the same chariot'. Women were free from the social constraints and girls had the right to choose their husband through *Gandharva Vivah*. In Rig Vedic time marriage was not compulsory and women could live in the house of their parents without fear. Wife was considered as 'ardhangini' (a better half), child marriage was unknown and widows were not expected to remain single in the memory of their dead husbands. Though women of early Vedic period relished freedom, equality and power, with the time, mainly after the Muslim invasion and Smritis, the status of women worsened. In Manu Smriti, Manu declares:

"Day and night, women must be kept in subordination to the males of the family: in childhood to the father, in youth to her husband, in old age to her sons." (**The Laws of Manu 5.148**)

The final thump came to women with the Christianity that restrained the rights and independence of the women of India. The position of women in India further devolved during the medieval period. In society child marriages, *Sati* practice, confinement of widow marriage, ban on girl education, sexual exploitation, *Purdah* system became prominent. This worse position of women was worsened by the foreign conquests, Muslim invasions, etc. Though the society was poisoned by these adversities, women managed to restore their position by taking part in religion, politics, education and literature and proving themselves excellent in those fields. The Western feminist movement shaped the position of Indian women during the British rule. In the nineteenth century, the influence of the British colonialism made women to stand out and raise their voice. With the western education and culture, the Indian woman has re-emerged as a new being. And with the tremendous development of women literacy, issues like early marriage, practice of *Sati* etc. were strongly

dealt even by women in British India. Freedom for the Indian woman meant freedom from centuries of male domination.

Albeit, in India, we do not have any school of feminism or any systematic theory related to feminism, yet writers like Kamala Das, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgel, Kamla Markandaya, Shobha De, Jhumpa Lahiri, Manju Kapoor, Shashi Deshpande etc. have presented their views about Indian women through their writings. This protest was voiced in many forms in Indian English fiction. Not only women writers but male writers like Tagore, MulkRaj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Manohar Malgonkar, etc. also dwell on the tortured womanhood.

Feminism in the West:

Women traditionally have been regarded as inferior to men, both physically and intellectually. They were under subjection of male members of the family and could not possess property in their own names, engage in business, or control the disposal of their children or even of their own persons.

But with the passage of time women became conscious of their rights and started demanding their rights in the male centric world. The question of the proper position of women in society, their functions in the family as well as in the society began to be raised in Victorian England. The first feminist document was Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* written in 1792. Even in the periods where there has been no significant political activism around women's subordination, individuals have been concerned with justice for women, for instance, Plato in his book *Republic* has said that woman should be trained to rule. But feminism as a movement started only after the Democratic movement of 1832, and by the late 60s and 70s feminism had emerged as an important political force in the western world. Hitherto enough ink has been spilled in

quarrelling over feminist issues. Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar are some of the feminist writers, as their books diagnosed the problem of women's inequality in society and proposed solutions. Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) comments on the contradictory position of women in history:

"Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant, she pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could hardly spell, and was the property of husband."

Kate Millett, in her book entitled *Sexual Politics* (1970), defines sexual politics as the process whereby the ruling sex tries to uphold and increase its power over the inferior sex. Some of the other major works are Olive Schreiner's *Women and Labour* (1911), Adrienne Rich's *Of Women Born* (1976), Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), etc. Male contributions to this kind of feminist writing include John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Woman* (1869) and Friedrich Engle's *The Origin of the Family* (1884). Mill believed that the liberty of the individual being is absolutely necessary for the development of the society and in his book he strongly advocated women's rights to vote, to enter any profession and to practise arts.

Shashi Deshpande: A Woman and an Artist

Shashi Deshpande, one of the eminent writers in the field of Indian English literature, was born in 1938, in Dharwad, Karnataka, to the noted Kannada dramatist as well as a distinguished Sanskrit scholar Sriranga. She pursued her education in Dharwad,

Mumbai and Bangalore. Shashi Deshpande had a very sharp mind. In Mumbai she received degree in Economics and she earned a law degree from Bangalore with a gold medal. She later received an MA in English Literature in 1970. After marriage she shifted to Mumbai and there she did a course in journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai. Thereafter, she took up a job as a journalist in the magazine "Onlooker". She worked there for a couple of months. While working in the magazine, she began writing and the first short story that she wrote got published in 1970. Her short stories were published in popular magazines like Femina, Eve's Weekly, etc. Her maiden collection of short stories was published under the title "Legacy" in the year 1978. The first novel penned by Shashi Deshpande was **The Dark Holds No Terrors**, which was published in 1980. Her novels are deeply rooted in India: the characters, settings, and the conflicts, inherently Indian. And due to the literary atmosphere in the family she got a very balanced and transparent view of many omnipresent dilemmas of human mind. Her novels are about women trying to understand themselves, their history, their roles and their place in this society, and above all their relationships with others. Shashi Deshpande explores individual and universal predicaments through the female psyche. Her novel titled **That Long Silence** brought her lot of praise and appreciation and she received the *Sahitaya Akademi Award* in 1990 and *Nanjangud Thirumalamba* award for her fabulous work in the novel. In 2009 she received *Padma Shri* award for this novel. Her other novel, **Roots and Shadows**, received the major award *Thirumathi Rangamal* Prize for the Best Indian novel of 1982-83. Her novels deal with the emotional deprivation of women. She has been actively involved in writing books for children and has penned four children's books till date. She has also written the script and screenplay for a prize-winning Hindi feature film "*Drishti*" and translated a play. Her books have been published both in India and abroad. The "Legacy", a collection of short stories, is a prescribed text for the graduate students in

Columbia University. And the novel **The Dark Holds No Terror** has been translated into German and Russian languages. Shashi Deshapande lives in Bangalore with her Pathologist husband.

Notable Works of Shashi Deshpande are as follows: The Legacy and Other Stories (1978), The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980), If I Die Today (1982), Come Up and Be Dead (1983), Roots and Shadows (1983), That Long Silence (1989), The Intrusion and Other Stories (1993), A Matter of Time (1999), Writing from the Margin and Other Essays, Small Remedies (2000), The Binding Vine (2002), Narayanpur Incident (2003), Moving On (2004), In the Country of Deceit (2008).

Objectives of the Study:

(i) To study feminist literary theory, its meaning, its significance, and the difference between the terms 'feminist', 'female' and 'feminine'. Feminism is generally thought of as a phenomenon of the 19th and 20th centuries. It will be tried to point out the difference between Liberal feminism, Classical Marxist feminism and Radical feminism, Eco feminism, Social feminism and Cultural feminism.

(ii) To examine the image of women in general and to explain how the change in the position and status of women has taken place through the centuries, in India particularly. During the research focus will be given on the position and situation of women, in both the western as well as eastern countries, not only in the present era but also in the ancient times. It will be tried to show how the women folk has been treated in the male dominated societies in the whole world, why women feel the need to raise

their voice against the patriarchal society, to struggle for equal rights in education, wealth, and in jobs.

(iii) To observe critically selected novels of Shashi Deshpande from feminist perspective and to examine how successful she is in getting over the feminine psychological and emotional problems. The purpose is to expose the feminine psyche in the novels of Shashi Deshpande, how she explores individual and universal predicaments through the female psyche and to find out whether the protagonists in her novels are able to achieve their desired aims or they compromise with the situation. During the study it will be also tried to find out that what type of psychological problems woman folk endures, how successfully they are dealing with the situations, and what is the male psychology and behaviour towards the female in their house or their female companions.

(iv) To analyze the themes of five selected novels of Shashi Deshpande from various dimensions and at different levels. The themes of the novels selected for the study will be examined and analyzed. It will be tried to find out how successfully she has depicted the themes of man-woman relationship, human desire, longing, body and gender discrimination, marginalization, rebellion, and protest in her fictions. It will also be analyzed that whether her characters and their problems represent the Indian society in general or they belong to any special class of the society.

(v) To examine how Shashi Deshpande has made use of mythical representations to expose the feminine psyche. As myths related to woman play a considerable part in literature it will be tried to find out to what extent it affects the customs and conduct of individuals and its importance

in daily life. Few myths have been more advantageous to the ruling caste than the myth of woman: it justifies all privileges and even authorizes their abuse. Women are also in the grip of these myths as they think that it is the duty of the woman to endure every kind of suffrage without any sigh and not to question the decisions and authority of the patriarchy. The emotional need of man is sustained, nourished and satisfied through mythical representations.

(vi) To scrutinize the narrative technique in the selected novels of Shashi Deshpande. To find out the different patterns of narration, linguistic devices used by her in her fiction, and to analyze how successful she has been in the use of these devices. Also to examine how winningly she has made use of English language to depict Indian traditions, customs, middle class Indian society and their way of living. To analyze how with the use of English language Shashi Deshpande has made a humble and honest attempt at globalizing the local Indian scenario.

(vii) By the study of the selected novels of Shashi Deshpande it is sought to prove her a feminist writer. After examining the themes of Shashi Deshpande's novels, her major concerns, different female characters and their problems, feminine psychology presented by her, her use of mythical representations to fulfill the emotional needs of her characters it will be tried to prove her a feminist writer.

Review of Literature:

Ever since antiquity, there have been women fighting to free their half of the total population of the world from male oppression. Many writers have written

about women emancipation. Shashi Deshpande is one of them. Researchers have studied her works from various point of views.

The book entitled *Novels of Shashi Deshpande in Postcolonial Arguments* by Mrinalini Sebastian presents the novels of Shashi Deshpande in the postcolonial framework. Such a juxtaposition of the theory and the text leads to the fascinating reading of the novels of Shashi Deshpande using a non-traditional approach. This book discusses the possibility of postcolonial readings of literary text.

S. Prasanna Sree in his work *Women in the Novels of Shashi* studies the novels of Shashi Deshpande and the women protagonists portrayed by her, with a view to understand and appreciate their trails and tribulations under the impact of the conflicting influence of tradition and modernity and to critically analyze their response to the emerging situation in life so as to fit themselves in the contemporary society.

The Fiction of 'Subaltern Past'--Shashi Deshpande and Sunetra Gupta by Saikat Majumdar, published in 2003, discusses Shashi Deshpande and Sunetra Gupta as modernist aesthetics.

Indian Women at the Cross Roads: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's heroines by Mala Renganathan deals with Deshpande's three novels entitled That Long Silence, Roots and Shadows and The Dark Holds No Terrors.

The Novels of Shashi Deshpande by Sarabjit Sandhu,(Delhi, Prestige Books, 1991).

Shashi Deshpande: A Feminist Study of Her Fiction by Mukta Atrey and Viney Kripal.(New Delhi, D. K. Publishers, 1998).

Another work on Shashi Deshpande is *The Fiction of Shashi Deshpande*, edited by R. S. Pathak.(New Delhi, Creative Books, 1998).

Man-Woman Relationship in Indian Fiction, with a Focus on Shashi Deshpande, Rajendra Awasthy, and Syed Abdul Malik by Seema Suneel.(New Delhi, Prestige Books). The book

was published in 1995. In this book focus is given on the relationship between man and woman as shown in the novels of Shashi Deshpande.

T.M.J. Indra Mohan's book entitled *Shashi Deshpande: A Critical Spectrum* includes the following contents: The Roots of Girlhood Casting Shadows on Womanhood: Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadow's by Pallavi and Rashmi Gaur, Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time "as an Exploration of a Woman's Inner Life" by N.B. Masal, Mother-Daughter Relationship in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande by Rashmi Sahi, From Feminine to Feminist Consciousness: Shashi Deshpande's The Stone Woman by Nirmala Prakash, Socialisation and Gender Construction in Shashi Deshpande's Novel's by N. Sharada Iyer, Towards a New World Order: The Female Self in Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time by Gur Pyari Jandial, Potent Remedies: Themes and Techniques in Shashi Deshpande's Small Remidies by Chandra Holm, The Trauma of a House- Wife: Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence by Rajeshwar Mittapalli.

Shivaji B. Methe has done his research on *Male Characters in Shashi Deshpande's Novels* under the guidance of Dr Bhagyshree Varma.

Portrayal of Womanhood in the fiction of Shashi Deshpande edited by Mukta M. Atrey in 1993. In this book Atrey depicts the woman characters presented by Shashi Deshpande in her fiction. This book deals with the fiction of Shashi Deshpande published before 1993.

Restructuring the Sentence of her life: A Study of Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukharjee, Namita Gokhale and Shobha De by Geetanjali Rajput under the guidance of Dr Deepshikha Kotwal in 2005.

Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande by Suman Bala, published in 2001, shows how Deshpande's women protagonists make a balance between their families and careers. In this book Suman Bala has included the papers from various English teachers and scholars from all over India. The book deals with her novels entitled, 'Roots and Shadows', That Long

Silence', 'The Dark Holds No Terrors', 'The Binding Vine', 'A Matter of Time' and 'Small Remedies'. The book includes chapters like: Women in the novels of Shashi Deshpande: An Introdution by Suman Bala, The Emergence of Bold Heroines in Contemporary Fiction by Alka Saxena, Shashi Deshpande's Women Protagonists: Balancing Family and Career by T. Ashok Rani, A Voice after the Long Silence: A Study of Roots and Shadows and That Long Silence by Anita Singh, Indian Womanhood: Fight for Freedom in Roots and Shadows by Parvati Bhatnagar, The Problem of Marriage and Affirmation of Self in Roots and Shadows by Y.S. Sharadha, A Woman's Heritage of the Commonwealth: A Study of The Dark Holds No Terrors by G. Dominic Savio, The Heroine in The Dark Holds No terrors by Shubha Tiwari, Problematising Feminine Discourse: A Post-Feminine Critique of The Dark Holds No Terrors by Charu Chandra Mishra, That Long Silence: Journey towards Self-Actualization by Rashmi Gaur, That Long Silence: A Study in Displaced Anger by Adesh Pal, The Plight of Modern Indian Woman in That Long Silence by Satish Barbuddhe, Dimentional Depth of Female Consciousness: A Study of Female Consciousness: A Study of The Binding Vine by K.M. Pandey, Joys and Sorrows of Womanhood in The Binding Vine by Basavaraj Naikar, Textselfworld: Interior Monologue in A Matter of Time by Pramod K. Nayar, Quest for Freedom: A Study of Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God and Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time by Suvarna Shinde, "Fractured memories": Small Remedies by Y.S. Sunita Reddy.

Shashi Deshpande : A Critical Elucidation by Amar Nath Prasad is a modest attempt to the various aspects of the literary world of Shashi Deshpande. It is a collection of scholarly research papers contributed by various English teachers and scholars from the different parts of India. It features articles concerning all the chief fictions and short stories of Shashi Deshpande. Her novels discussed in this book are Root and Shadows, That Long Silence, The Dark Holds No Terrors, The Binding Vine, A Matter of Time, Small Remedies and The Stone Women. The last two articles critically examine the short stories of the novelist with

different angles and perspectives. The book includes chapters like Gender Discrimination in Roots and Shadows: a critical study by Amar Nath Prasad., Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows: a feminist study by Gunjan Sushil., Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows: a critical study by S. Prasanna Sree., Deception and dualities of Indu in Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows by Shivani R. Upadhyay., The search for a voice: a study of Shashi Deshpande's novel That Long Silence by Rupalee Burke., Tremors and traumas: a psycho-familial analysis in Kamala Markandaya's Nectar in a Sieve, Anita Desa's In Custody and Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence by C. Anna Latha Devi, Writing from the margins: a study of Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence by Ram Sharma, The woman steps out to conquer in The Dark Holds No Terrors by S. Prasanna Sree, Facets of feminism in Shashi Deshpande's The Dark Holds No Terrors by Bhabani S. Baral, Dimensional depth of female consciousness: Shashi Deshpande's The Bindings Vine by Krishna Mohan Pandey, Mauling men in marriage moorings: an aspect of A Matter of Time by M. Rosary Royar, The concept of modern and liberal women in Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time by Nagendra Kumar Singh, Family relationships in Shashi Deshpande's Small Remedies by Indira Nityanandam, Shashi Deshpande's Small Remedies: a woman's quest for refuge: a reappraisal by Ruby Malhotra, Feminist consciousness in Shashi Deshpande's The Stone Women by Satyendra Kumar, Postmodern feminist writers : a study of the selected works of Shashi Deshpande and Githa Hariharan by W.S. Kottiswari, The novels of Shashi Deshpande: A Critical Observation by Sheikh Salahuddin, Human relations: beyond human grasp in the Short Stories of Shashi Deshpande by Pallavi Mishra, Silent submission: the roles women perform in life in Shashi Deshpande's Collected Stories Volume by Himadri Roy.

In the book *Feminist Perspective On The Novels Of Shashi Deshpande*(2001) Y S Sunita Reddy evaluate all the works of Shashi Deshpande from feminist perspective

Chapterization:

The topic of the research is ***Shashi Deshpande's Novels: A Study in Feminism***

Chapter I: Introdution: Life and Literary Career of Shashi Deshpande

Chapter II: On Feminism

Chapter III: The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980) and Roots and Shadows (1983)

Chapter IV: That Long Silence (1989) and A Matter of Time (1999)

Chapter V: The Binding Vine (2002) and In the Country of Deceit (2008)

Chapter VI: Feminism in her Narrative Technique

Chapter VII: Conclusion

Bibliography

Research Methodology:

During the research, the following methods and tools of research will be used to write the dissertation and to reach the conclusion:

(i) By eliciting the literary material on the fiction of Shashi Deshpande, after the study of books and treatise of learned scholars available for the study, it will be tried to prove her a feminist writer. This will include both the primary books as well as the secondary books available and to analyze her fictions after close study. Biographical sources will also be examined to get knowledge about the life and works of Shashi Deshpande.

(ii) The study of various articles in literary journals and magazines, published in India and Abroad, will be done to gain information on the fiction of Shashi Deshpande and on feminist approach. Knowledge will be attained after the study of various articles, reviews, editorials published in the scholarly journals and magazines. Articles will be searched with the help of reference works, like the indexes and bibliographies, which provide data about research material.

(iii) In various news-papers articles and literary reviews are published and the study of these reviews provides good knowledge. These news paper articles are of great help as they provide knowledge of contemporary feminine issues and female problems, modern society and its needs, problems faced by modern working women, husband-wife roles in the modern society, and about the reasons of dispute between them. During the research information will be acquired by the study of various articles published in news- papers, in India as well as in abroad, on female problems and on the novels of Shashi Deshpande.

(iv) By inviting valued opinions of critics and scholars at present living in India and abroad and by using e-mail discussion groups to it will be tried to authenticate the research work. As internet has become a good source of knowledge now a days and people share their views and opinions through different internet sources like e-mail discussion groups help will be taken from these groups and it will be tried to know the opinions of critics and scholarly people.

(v) Information will be attained by the minute study of unpublished theses, e-journals, web references, research sites and web indexes. Through these internet sources information will be collected about feminism (its theory and definition), work done for the emancipation of women, about feminism in India and about the works of Shashi Deshpande.

(vi) By studying the anthologies and encyclopedias knowledge will be gained on feminism, feminist writers and fiction of Shashi Deshpande. The study of the anthologies and encyclopedias will be helpful to make the research reliable. Encyclopedias give introductory

information about subjects, for example Encyclopedia of Feminist Literature by Kathy J. Whitson, Greenwood Press, 2004 will be helpful to get knowledge about feminism and literature.

(vii) It will be made an attempt to consult authentic dictionaries (for difficult meanings) and thesauruses (for synonyms) for the research paper. Dictionaries are useful to bring consistency in the spellings used throughout the research paper and to avoid plagiarism. Among the most authoritative dictionaries for English language are: Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language and The Oxford English dictionary. Thesaurus is useful to find the most precise word for a particular context and to vary the choice of words.

(viii) The research will be made authentic by visiting special libraries, advanced study centers, virtual libraries and web search engines. Help will be taken from the material available in these sources. As Modern Academic Libraries are the most reliable guides for research papers therefore, books, pamphlets and dissertations present in these libraries will also be consulted for the research purpose.

Social Relevance of the Study:

Through the work it will be attempted to find out the feminist views in the novels of Shashi Deshpande and the narrative technique and mythical references used by her in her novels to represent the female psyche. The study will have the following social relevance:

(i) The research will be useful for the researchers and students who have interest in the feminist literary theory because by this work they will get knowledge about the meaning and concepts of feminism, about western and eastern feminism and different types of feminist theories. It will also be helpful to know about the situation of woman

in ancient as well as contemporary society and problems faced by females in the patriarchal society.

(ii) The work will provide knowledge about the life and works of Shashi Deshpande. It will provide knowledge as why Shashi Deshpande is a feminist writer, what are the different aspects in her novels which makes her a feminist, on what issues she throws light, and who are the other Indian writers who have contributed as feminist writers.

(iii) It will be helpful to the students as they will get knowledge about the feminine psyche of the woman characters in the fiction of Shashi Deshpande. The work will be helpful as it will provide knowledge about the psychological problems faced by the women characters in the novels of Shashi Deshpande and how these characters deal with different situations in their lives.

(iv) The work will also be useful for those researchers and students who want to do their research on Shashi Deshpande's works. They will get ideas about the basic themes of her novels. And as the above mentioned critical works do not include her latest novel, *In the Country of Deceit (2008),* the present study will be helpful to the students to get knowledge about this novel also.

(v) As such, the present study will be an important contribution not only to literature but also to women's studies and sociology. As it will give information about feminism, female writers and their works, women issues and their problems, along with the social thinking about the role of woman in the society and the psychology formed by man about their superior nature.

(vi) The study will also acquaint the students with the Indian scenario, the middle-class society, their customs and their way of living.

(vii) The students will also become acquainted with the mythical references, and narrative technique used by Shashi Deshpande in her novels. Also they will come to know how

myths related to woman plays a considerable part in literature and to what extent does it affect the customs and conduct of individuals and its importance in daily life.

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